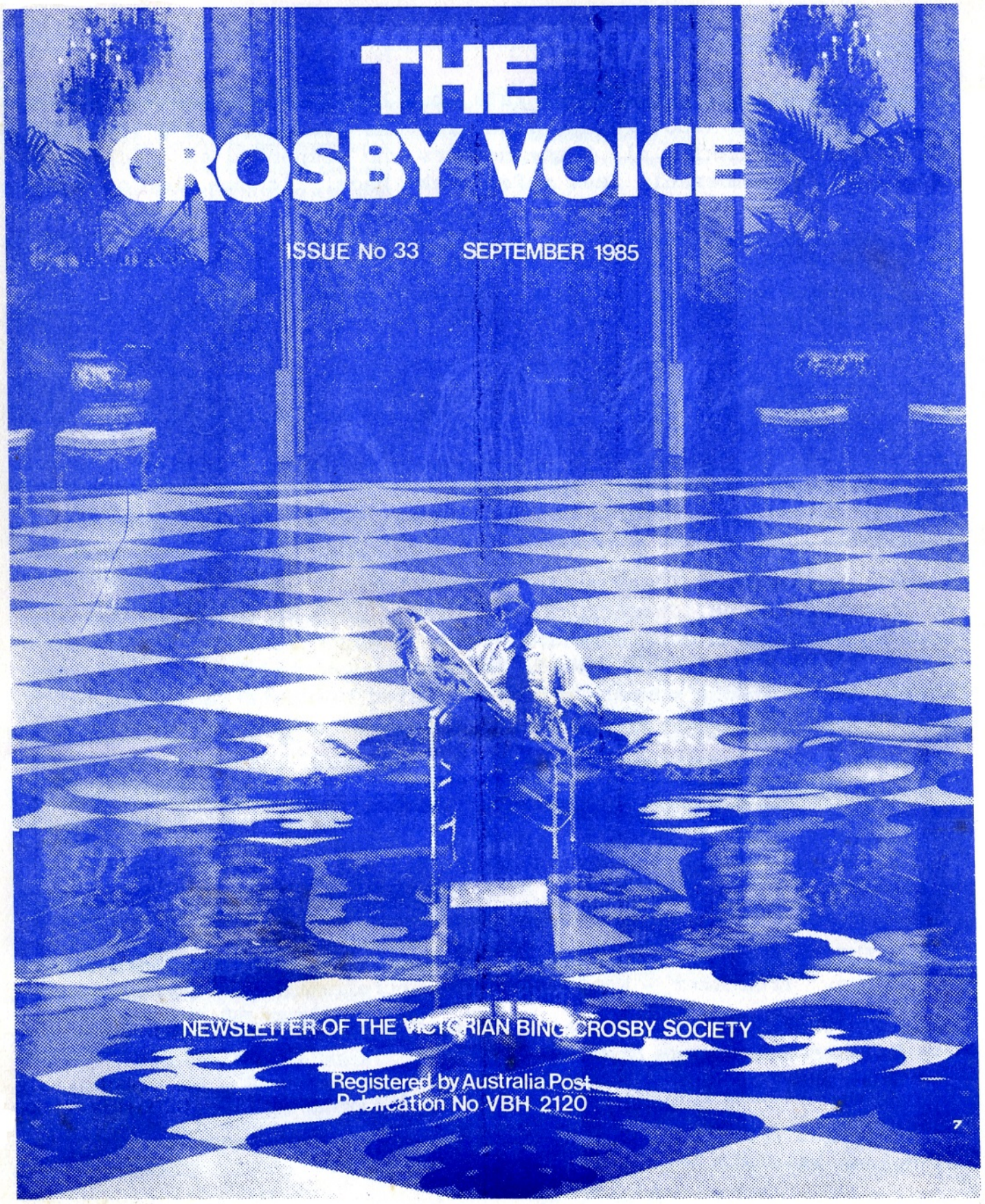

THE CROSBY VOICE

ISSUE No 33 SEPTEMBER 1985

NEWSLETTER OF THE VICTORIAN BING CROSBY SOCIETY

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Hello again,

Well, here we are, a few weeks late, but here nevertheless, with our third edition of 'The Crosby Voice' for the year 1985. I'd like to start out by thanking all those members who responded so quickly to our call for membership fees a few weeks back. At the time of writing, we are only about 50 memberships short of having everyone renew and that would have to be a record for this early in the year! If you were one of the 50, you'll find a reminder slip with this newsletter. Please renew now if you are able. It saves us an enormous amount of time and trouble.

Overseas members - you'll hear from your local representatives when your subs are due.

Our Treasurer Keith Dorman is currently travelling through England and Europe with his wife Roz and youngest daughter Bronwyn. In fact, Keith is planning to visit the annual Crosby tribute in Leeds and we hope to have his report of this special event in our November magazine.

I must confess that I was a little apprehensive when I started putting this issue together. I just didn't seem to have all that much material to make a magazine. Yet 52 pages later, I find that I have too much and will have to hold some over til next time! Thanks to all those members who contributed newspaper articles, etc, especially from overseas. We owe you a great debt.

THE VICTORIAN BING CROSBY SOCIETY, P.O. Box 422, South Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 3205.

Affiliated with the Queensland Bing Crosby Society, PO Box 92 Ferny Hills, Queensland, Australia 4055.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: President - Bob Machliss. Vice-President - Ken Orren. Treasurer - Keith Dorman. Secretary - Les Saynor.

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Well, let's get on with a rundown of what's in this issue.

On pages 5 to 21 we have another excellent chapter in Vern Taylor's great series HAIL KMH! This time round we have "The Singers and The Songs". Sadly we report that next issue will see the final episode. We're going to miss it.

Bing's son Harry was married in mid-year. Read about it on page 22.

"Collectors' Corner" in the centre pages features another batch of rare and unusual labels.

On page 27, Frank Murphy has some most unusual Christmas stickers for you to buy. Just right for your Christmas mail.

Bob Hope has a new book out. If you're a golfing fan or if you just enjoy good anecdotes, then you won't want to miss "Confessions of a Hooker". There's a whole chapter on Bing too, and we publish excerpts printed in an American newspaper. See page 28.

We've had to make drastic changes to the way in which we order overseas record releases for members. If you ordered the records advertised in our last magazine, you'll know why! You can read abou the latest issues and how you can buy them on page 33.

The Bing Crosby Historical Society is in a financial crisis. Read how you can help, on page 39.

Did you know that Bing is now ART! Ted Paradissis discovered this when he visited the National Gallery mid-year. Turn to page 41.

Girvan Paterson recently received an interesting letter from Steve Hoffman of MCA records. You can read it too, on page 42.

On page 44, you can read about some more new additions to the club cassette library, thanks to the generosity of an English member.

The Queensland Bing Crosby Society is going great guns. Read their latest report on page 47.

Back in the early 60's, it was strongly rumoured that Bing would visit Australia. On page 48 you can see one of the newspaper articles that helped fuel those rumours.

And finally, on page 49, we have the concluding part of Tiny Tim's interesting article "The Great Crooners".

I hope you enjoy reading the magazine. I enjoyed putting it together.

FUTURE FUNCTIONS

MONDAY OCTOBER 28TH

We're happy to announce that our October movie will be the wonderful

"MISSISSIPPI"

starring not only Bing but W.C.Fields in one of his great screen roles. .Bad luck. It's our AGM too!

MONDAY DECEMBER 2ND

Our final film evening should have been "Going My Way" but unfortunately we can't get hold of a 16mm copy and the State Film Centre will not let us show movies that have been taped off TV. So, instead, we'll be screening

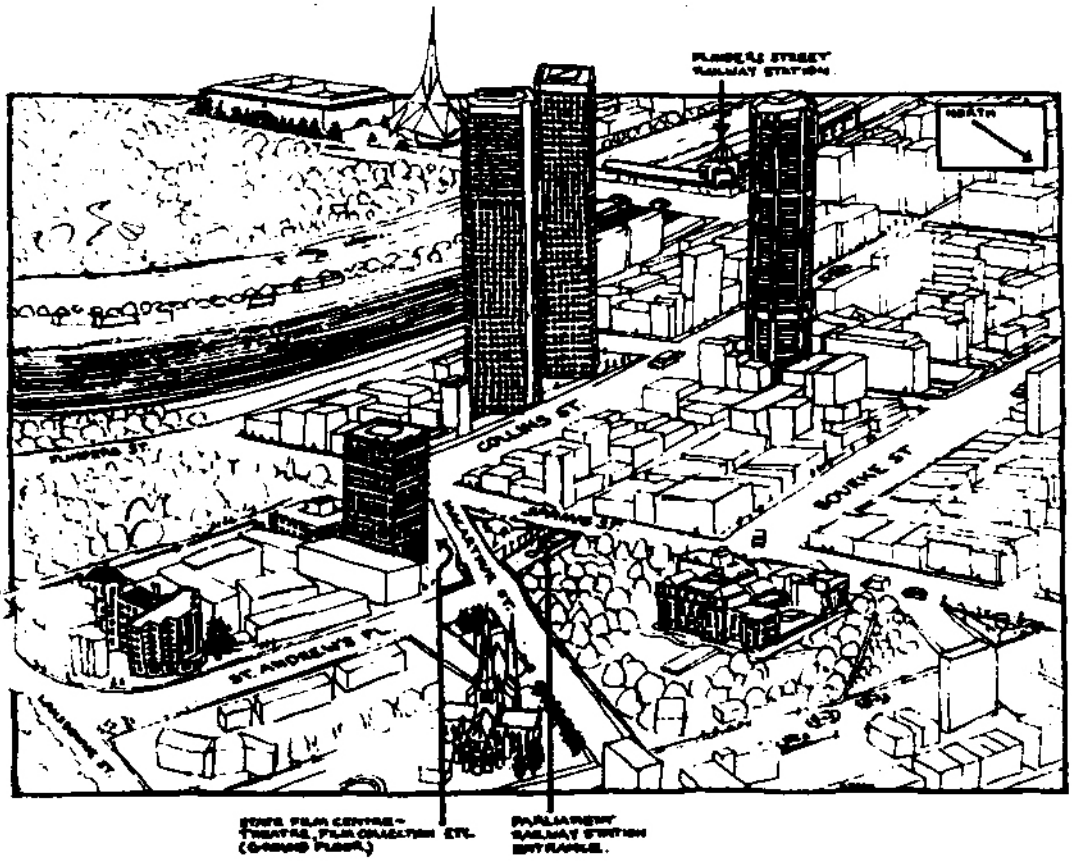
"COLLEGE HUMOUR"

which has some terrific Crosby songs including the sensational class-room number in which Bing reprises some of his recent hits. You'll love it!

ENTRY COST to both the above will be $3 for members, $6 for member families, $1 for students and pensioners and $5 for non-members.

VENUE as usual, will be the theatrette of the State Film Centre and the map below will show you where that is. Best place to park is in Treasury Place and the entrance is shown at the left of the map. Ignore the guard box. You are free to park there at night.

STARTING TIME for the screening is 7.30 but get there around 7.00 as there will be plenty to keep you occupied. Ask the regulars!



PAST FUNCTIONS

Our Fourth Function for 1985 was a film evening on June 17th at which we screened the always popular "WE'RE NOT DRESSING", supported by the Dick Powell feature "ON THE AVENUE". For the first time in memory, yours truly had to retreat homewards at half-time, due to a combination of ailments. However, from all reports, the evening went off very smoothly. Raffle winners were Allan Barry, Ian McRae and Stan Sunley.

Our Fifth Function for the year turned out to be our best-attended ever. Over 130 members and friends of the Victorian Bing Crosby Society and the International Al Jolson Society got together to enjoy first, "SWANNEE RIVER" starring Al and "PENNIES FROM HEAVEN" starring Bing. With hindisght, we probably should have screened "MISSISSIPPI" as the second film. The comparison between the Jolson and Crosby singing styles on the same films would have been interesting.

Raffle winners on the night were Ray Newson, Ron Graham, Alec Coates and Wally Carson. Congratulations all. Top prize of the evening was a copy of the excellent films book "Gotta Sing, Gotta Dance".

(Over the page - HAIL KMH! continues)

HAIL KMH!

BING CROSBY AND THE KRAFT MUSIC HALL

(c)1985 by Vernon Wesley Taylor

...AND A KNOCK-OUT SHOW

***Tune in* KRAFT MUSIC HALL**

EVERY THURSDAY NIGHT, NBC RED NETWORK

PART 4: THE SINGERS AND THE SONGS

As most of those who closely followed the career of Bing Crosby knows, he shared his first month's broadcasts of the Kraft Music Hall with his old boss, Paul Whiteman, one of a surprising list of coincidences involving that very excellent radio series. Having him do the second hour from Hollywood was a clever way to test the listener's reaction and discover whether he could gain the necessary acceptance from the loyal Whiteman fans as well as widen his own interest with the listening audience.

This remarkable sendoff was not a greatly calculated risk by Kraft nor the J.Walter Thompson advertising agency that controlled the show. Crosby was, after all, still pretty close to the pinnacle of the first important phase of his career, still the college kids' idol, equivalent in those days to the Bobby-soxers who swooned over Frank Sinatra in the 'forties and the rock 'n roll fans of the 'sixties. However, vocalists had not yet made much of a splash in radio prime time. Rudy Vallee could not carry his own show without heavy helpings of comedy and name-celebrities. Generally, they were used as features, or if they had a show of their own, it was a 15 minuter with little more than a studio orchestra and an announcer.

Bing, with his recent 30 minute Woodbury Facial Soap program, had gotten himself, more or less, out of that stricture; his three previous series had all been among th ¼-hour shows. But he was what his old vaudeville partner, Al Rinker, told the writer, "a natural, Bing was a natural". Unlike so many of the others, some who could not even bring themselves to carry dialogue, he seemed relaxed and comfortable with the scary microphone (Lanny Ross, in the first months of his Chase and Sandborn's Showboat program was too nervous to do anything beyond singing his solos and an actor was hired to do his dialogue in imitation of his speaking voice, with Captain Andy.) As a consequence, he and the Kraft show became an immediate success. J.Walter Thompson rescued Bob Burns and Carroll Carroll from the dying Paul Whiteman series and sent them out to join Bing. Whiteman returned to his beloved concert engagements. For nearly four hundred broadcasts, KMH never looked back.

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If male vocalists could finally carry a series of such magnitude, the so-called girl-singers were still very much a questionable commodity. Though Kate Smith, the first important one of them with a wide following was doing well, her sex-appeal quotient, which,

ORDERS ARE NOW BEING TAKEN FOR THE REPRINT OF "THE ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD"

Australian members might very well ask "What's that?!" as very few copies of this splendid book found their way to this country back in 1973. "The Road To Hollywood" was the first (and still the most) comprehensive book on Bing's film career, listing plots, credits, casts, dates, TV showings, photographs, etc. The original book was over 300 pages long. The revised edition includes new chapters on TV, cartoons, awards and much more. The book should be out late this year or early next year, but will be limited to just 500 copies! To reserve one, you must send your deposit now of £7.50 to JOHN JOYCE, 21 BIRCHFIELD GARDENS, GATESHEAD, TYNE & WEAR NE9 7TJ. UK The final price is unknown at this time but should be between £10.00 and £15.00. Write now! Yours truly has a copy of the original publication and it is one of the most useful books in his collection!

after all, was what was selling the male singers, was low. Not even Ruth Etting nor the Boswells (who kept insisting on accentuating jazz-flavoured renditions) inspired that kind of belief in the mid-thirties on radio. NBC itself did not bring in a regular girlsinger until four years after it started in California.

Music - even popular music was no exception to the rule of sexual discrimination. As in every other field of human endeavour, excepting baby-bearing, womens' place, as Orson Bean used to like to tell his television audiences, is in the stove. They still struggle like a racial minority, for what they gain.

Connie Boswell (Her name-spelling was later changed by a publicity agent) was already over the hill at the elderly age of 29 when her old friend, Bing Crosby gave her the first girlsinger spot on the Kraft series. She had guested December 30, 1937, after working on the 'Refreshment Time' show with Ken Murray, and with the Richard Himber program. She became the first of the five regular female vocalists on the November 14, 1940 outing.

Like most of them, her career had been desultory. Crippled by polio, which was seriously complicated by a bad fall while she was still a young girl, she nevertheless began her professional work while still only twelve. Her sisters, Martha and Helvetia ("Vet") won a radio-talent contest at a New Orleans radio station singing surprisingly close harmony and playing musical instruments, with little Connie wrestling with her 'cello. Very soon, they were making phonograph records, then they were off to Hollywood, more records, radio and films. By the time they had grown up they had inspired numberless imitators, as good artists always do. This watered down their impact to a slight extent and, at the height of it all for them, "Vet" decided to get married.

The marriage broke up their fourteen year act and Connie, still in her wheelchair went single-O. She went back to Decca and put out some of the best girlsinger records, both sweet and jazz. "When she was sweet, she was very very good", a great bandleader told a reporter, "but when she was hot she was better." She even made hit records swinging the classics.

That November broadcast must have been a great one. Connie laid down one of her wonderful jazz standards, "Basin Street Blues", Bill Frawley did a duet with her on a probably hoked-up version of a recent Bing film sing "If I Had My Way"" and Wingy Manone supplied

(BING AND MARY)

Bing with raucous trumpet support. It was found that she could handle comedy dialogue and was pencilled in by Carroll in the brief sketch near the top of the show.

Boswell was never typed on KMH, the only girlsinger there to escape that dubious honour. Her most popular metier was the jazz number, especially when it was given a strong, swinging background. Still... when she was sweet, she was very, very sweet... On more than one airing, she played her 'cello; a most original change of pace indeed. She made more records with Bing that any other girlsinger, except Rosemary Clooney, all of which were also heard on the program but her most touching and memorable vocal was done in a film the year she left Kraft, "Kiss the Boys Goodbye" which starred the next KMH girl... another coincidence...Mary Martin. In her only scene she was carried into a low-light nightclub setting by two handsome young men, placed on top of a grand piano and proceeded to do the only bright spot in an otherwise dull film by singing "Sand In My Shoes", which tells of a wanderer who loved to walk.

Boswell left Kraft after the following Christmas show. She had been there but thirteen months, still hers was the longest tenure of the five. World War Two had just started for America and the atmosphere was one of a subdued, almost palpable quality. We trembled like a leaf at the abyss, someone wrote later, and then- just fell in. For a long time, humour and humourous music would seem a trifle forced and self-conscious. On that December day, only 'sweet' and 'cute' was used, with Bing joining Connie for "Rose O'Day". He signed off with his first radio rendition of "White Christmas".

The star of "Kiss the Boys Goodbye" was next on board. As Connie had done, Mary Martin guested beforehand (July 31, 1941) before her fulltime position. Her value as a fine singer had not been taken seriously in Hollywood, not even after her pair of pictures with Crosby, but he felt she possessed the proper vocal attributes to fit the changed mood of the listeners. She had a sweet-soprano range that could easily adapt itself to subtle ironic and whimsical flavourings. In addition, her appearances in "Rhythm on the River" and "Birth of the Blues" encouraged a romantic illusion in those same listeners.

Though Martin was once compared to another operatic -type singer, Jeannette MacDonald, by being called 'The iron butterfly's sister', she might well have taken pride in the comparison. Both women

achieved strong, lasting success by possessing tenacity blended with feminine sweetness and owning very good singing voices. The New Year's Day show, 1942, repeated history. As with Connie, the girlsinger joined Bing and Wingy Manone,again along for the ride. The one-armed trumpeter was given even more to do this time, while the two leads 'advertised' their new movie by launching the first of many renditions of "Wait Til The Sun Shines Nellie". They did another the very next week, "The Waiter and The Porter and the Upstairs Maid". Song titles seemed to be growing longer.

Certainly wartime songs were getting stronger. They became regularly used on KMH. Everybody had to sing them. Beginning with the WWI versions until the songmasters could catch up, within a few weeks one of the most poignant was heard from Bing, "I Don't Want to Walk Without You". After that came the evocative "Apple Blossom Time" and that other 'apple' song, more evocative still, "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree". Bing and Mary did them as duets together and as solos. The public response was terrific. Newspaper by this time began to detail some of the broadcasts, listing songs and gueststars, besides the mere day and hour. Readers could make themselves ready each Thursday over their paper and morning coffee for the Kraft show that night.

By the middle of the year, while the war was raging everywhere, listeners could hear such things as "The Bombadier's Song", "Johnny Doughboy Found a Rose in Ireland", "When My Dreamboat Comes Home" and by October, "A Boy in Khaki - A Girl in Lace" and Hoagy Carmichael's first warsong, "A Cranky Old Yank in a Clanky Old Tank". One of the biggest and the best, by Sol Lesser, "Praise The Lord and Pass the Ammunition". Would short titles ever return?

Martin was most often assigned the cute and whimsical tunes. Rarely did she get to do a "Summertime" or "Indian Love Call", vehicles more suited to her singing style. Late in the war, public reaction would return to such material but she would never entirely abandon the kinds of things she sang so much and so well on KMH. Mary Martin outran and outlasted all the other girls, becoming one of the singing stages great legends. She made an estimated success on Broadway in a pastiche called "Leave it To Me". Her number in that show, "My Heart Belongs to Daddy", is still well remembered. When she was offered another opportunity to do a Broadway show, she returned to New York to star in "One Touch Of Venus". What the films and KMH lost can only be gauged by what the musical stage gained.

She left suddenly, before the end of the 1942 season and Ginny Simms tried to take her place, but the listeners refused to take her seriously. Number three, who had always been on KMH, right under their collective noses, had gone on to more important things. Fortunately, Bing convinced her she was sincerely wanted back again. She came in a few weeks early for the usual guest appearance and hung up her coat for the second-longest stay of them all, a few weeks later. Trudy Erwin (opposite) had come home. Marcel Proust tells us that coincidence is really fore-ordained reality. Marcel did not live to catch the Kraft Cheese Show. Close attention must now be requested of the reader if the next web of coincidence is to be fully appreciated.

"My becoming a soloist with Bing was a long story," she recently told Mr Larry Kiner of Spokane records. "I had been a Music Maid (of which more later) on KMH for three years when Kay Kyser asked me to join his band. After much soul-searching and long talks with Bing and the Maids, I (went) with Kay." But Kay didn't like her name; not Trudy, but 'Ginny' because Ginny Sims had, not long before, left his organization for the movies, so "I told him if that was the case, he would have to choose, and Trudy it was!"

Thus is was that Virginia 'Jinny' Erwin, late of the music maids, late of Kay Kyser and his Musical Kollege, became Trudy Erwin the girlsinger on KMH. But not quite yet. First she, with Harry Babbitt, gave Kyser his first hit record (Ginny Simms had not managed to do that), "Who Wouldn't Love You".

Her guest spot behind her (December 14th, 1942), she became number three on the February 4th airing and sang her Kyser hit, with Bing. As Martin before her, Trudy's numbers were type-cast, usually sweet or light, never of the heavy-breathing variety. For some reason she did very few solos, possibly because of the shortened version of the program, for it changed the first of the year to the 30 minute format. She was excellent in all her duets with Bing, following or leading; dovetailing or otherwise neatly fitting her lyric set to his. Most of the best of the Crosby duets with women singers were done with the brown-haired, soft-eyed, petit Trudy.

"One of the songs Bing and I sang together was "Stay as Sweet as You Are". Strange as it seems, when I was a senior in high-school I had harmonized that very same song with a record of Bing in a little recording booth at the World's Fair. Dreams do come true!"

As the others, she took part in the sketches and bits of business through the broadcast each week. "I also did what was called the 'memory spot' with Bing. He played 'Harry' talking to his wife 'Trudy' and at the end of our conversation, we segued into a duet."

Romance, along with music filled the air on the show. Jinny had been courted by the sound engineer, Murdo MacKenzie, while she was still one of the Maids. She changed not only her first name to suit Kay, she changed her last name to suit Murdo about the same time.

Returning to both husband and boss, Trudy Jinny Erwin remained as the KMH girlsinger through the rest of the year, love and marriage finally winning over art. She did reappear in a strange sort of farewell during Bing's last days with KMH.

By now, after three years of using a regular female vocalist, the venerable Hall had become quite accustomed to them and had no intention of doing without that magic presence, no matter ambitions, matrimonial or professional obtruded. So, following a flurry of false starts, number four whirled in, a blur of blond curls, blue-eyes and white teeth. Her name was Marilyn Maxwell and she too had already begun her film career, as a chorine in Judy Garland's

(Bing with Marilyn Maxwell)

"Presenting Lily Mars", with likewise no intention of giving it up or even slowing it down for a radio show. She gave KMH the chance to hold her and have her for eight months, and she did it without the apprenticeship of a guest spot.

Her first endeavour was a lightly delivered tune then making the rounds, "Tess's Torch Song", doing it on the second solo position. The date was February 3rd, 1944. Evidently solos for the ladies were back, whatever the real reason for Trudy to do most of her work in duet. She likewise fitted in well in the non-singing areas, keeping up with Bing, Ukie, Ken Carpenter and anyone else handy. Her handling of her material was of a high calibre, as though she had been at it for years; and it only got better as her residency progressed.

Marilyn did her first duet with Bing two weeks later, and while Bing laid on with the war songs and his familiar standards, he generally had her join him on various kinds of tunes. She seems suitable for ballads, despite a somewhat thin musical quality but was best suited to the lighter things. She managed to wangle a few lovely solos, but her work with Bing is best remembered. Numbers like "There's a Small Hotel", "Something to Remember You By", "Two SLeepy People" and "Together" demonstrate their cooperative was with the attractive new top ballads.

Maxwell was getting busier in pictures. She landed a good part in a Kay Kay Kyser (him again?) double-bill epic, "Swing Fever". Other radio spots followed. Eventually, Bing lost her to Bob Hopd where her fame was assured, for she became part of his troupe travelling the war areas; his girl Friday.

When she left the Hall on October 12th, Bing was not there. He too did a little war-entertaining; he had visited England and France but had only arrived in New York, too late to make it back in time to Los Angeles for the broadcast. George Murphy stood in for him and did his duet with Maxwell, "Thou Swell". Crosby was piped in at terrific expense from the East Coast and suffered Bob Hope's sharp and funny responses without being able to prevent it. He nevertheless succeeded in getting in, by now, the great Bing-identity song, "White Christmas". Then Marilyn went away with Mr Hope.

Eugenie Baird, the final KMH resident lady, brought her own distinctive way with a song with her, as had all the others. Hers was a variety of the warm, soft, serious girl-friend; one a home-coming GI might conceivably want to take home to his folks. "A voice", said Johnny Mercer, you could cuddle up to". She sang mostly solos and every one of them was a gentle sentimental ballad. Even the few duets with Bing were the same. The 'front office' undoubtedly knew what the listeners wanted 'out there': ripe sentiment, escape from the war, promises of a pregnant tomorrow, pregnant that is, with expectation of reward for a terrible job well done.

Like Bing, Eugenie gained her first popularity as a bandsinger, hitting her stride only a couple of years before with the Tony Pastor aggregation, then gaining prominence with the excellent Glen Gray Casa Loma orchestra. Either Bing or Norm Blackburn, head of West Coast operations for the Thompson agency persuaded her to give KMH a shot. She joined for the Fall season opener with Bing very much present once more.

The great, still very popular broadcast was subtly changing, partly because the world was a vastly changed place to what it had been a few fascinating years before. The 'separation-type song', things like "I'm Making Believe", "Oh How I Miss You Tonight", "We Mustn't Say Goodbye", "Something to Remember You By" were not being done so much anymore. By the time Baird entered the Music Hall, the public mood had shifted, if ever so slightly, once again to the out and out heavy sentimental ballad, and there it was to stay until the war neared its close six or seven months later. This is not to say that KMH did not essay the bright songs. They did, and in plenty, thankfully. Some of them became wonderful standards very quickly. It is thought indeed that these tunes helped to break the spell of the overwhelming ballad. Mercer and Carmichael led the way, for the most part, with things like "Accentuate the Positive", "Glow-worm", "The Old Music

Master", but there were others, like "Is You Is Or Is You Ain't My Baby" and "One Meat Ball" separating the numbers like "Always" and "I Promise You" and "This Heart of Mine".

Crosby began his famous medleys from his films at this time, placing them at the end of the broadcasts. Like the Baird solos, they were warmly wrapped sentiment. He stopped them when Baird went away to be a bandsinger again at the end of the spring season. She went to work for Paul Whiteman...

Bing had got his way during this period and the studio audience was dispensed with (any performer prefers the control he gets without an audience, especially in live entertainment), at least for awhile (home audiences prefer to hear and feel the presence of a laughing, happy crowd to the sound of silence during a broadcast). KMH had grown heavier, somehow, yet much more intimate; even the commercials were quiet. The standby tune (though not its medley) had disappeared, naturally, when the show was reduced to a half-hour. The memory-spot was heard no more. Yet, in many ways, it was a better display. There was more Bing, more music.

From the time when Connie Boswell was hired until the series ended, there was a total of fifteen girlsingers, a period of about five and a half years and 188 broadcasts. As we have seen, five were regulars. The others, all singers, primarily, and not important film performers (such entertainers were classified as guests, even though they did little more than sing), appeared once; one or two of them were invited back again.

These temporary people were as varied as possible, as though a diligent search was on to find another regular. They all are bunched into three separate periods during the show's history, the longest being most of the year, 1944, following Eugenie. Nan Wynn and Margaret Lenheart also recorded with Bing, the others were lovely people like Dale Evans, Lina Romay, Georgia Gibbs and Peggy Lee, who worked with Bing so extensively later. Two of the regulars, Trudy Erwin and Marilyn Maxwell returned for one more show each with Bing near the very end.

A little footnote should be inserted: Two of the 'temporaries' aided the writer very much in his researches. Like several others, they sat still for interviews, and brought him up to date on themselves. Margaret Lenheart is still in retirement, living in Seattle. She is still a beautiful, graceful, slim woman with that special aura about

her that such trained performers always have, while Lina Romay has not changed one whit, though she will say she has. She is as exciting and electric as she was when she worked for Xavier Cugat, and made films. Today, she is the announcer for Hollywood Park Racetrack, doing her work in English and Spanish flawlessly, without a trace of accent. (Carroll Carroll told me she could not speak German anyway.)

Of the vocal groups who worked on the show, the Paul Taylor Choristers are the least documented and must so remain until more information is unearthed on the series. They probably began on May 27th, 1937 and ended their run about a year and a half later. So many of the performers began their work on January 1st and ended it at Christmas. Of course, Paul Taylor's group worked for Bing later on records, or some variation of it. They were background music, functioning much like the orchestra. They were replaced by a five-girl group when Bing wanted lighter back-up.

The Charioteers, a black quartet had begun as college students, at Wilberforce in Ohio, then like the Boswells, made it into radio through a local contest. They worked in Cincinnati (Ohio) for a couple of years, then hit it a little bigger and left home for New York, eventually landing a plum position in what became one of the longest-running musical productions in history, Olson and Johnson's "Hellzapoppin" in in 1938.

They signed up for Kraft and began November 1st, 1942. They were immediately popular with the audience and with Bing. "They can sing anything four different ways", he once said. Mainly for KMH they stuck to spirituals and humor-songs ("Straighten Up and Fly Right", "Tabby the Cat"). Their beautiful work with Crosby is one of thelasting adornments of the program. Two of them were brothers, Willie and Ira Williams. The other two, Eddy Jackson and Howie Daniel supplying the balance to the brothers with a second tenor and a bass voice, made them famous. Their bright clever arrangements were all done by their pianist, who also appeared on the series, Jimmy Sherman. They appeared with Bing after the Hall. They must have been good to have remained for over three and a half years!

The Trotter organization boasted more than one musician who wanted to be a comedian. While Jerry Colonna managed to forsake his trombone and obtain a few guest-shots on the program, he became Hope's second banana, as we know. Another was Spike Jones. He became a

most unusual funnyman by not giving up his music. Too familiar to require explanation here, his City Slickers began obscurely enough on KMH. Jones was Trotter's drummer and he was a very good one, if he was very noisy. He sometimes yelled acccompaniment to his flailing sticks. During Bob Burn's reign he had been detailed to aid the orchestra manager, Perry Botkin in coming up with something inventive in the way of musical intros and bridges and the like to heighten the Burns spot. Thus the appalling advent of the Slickers' whistles, snorts, burps and all the rest of it. They were too good to hold down and so Bing agreed to appear in public with them, on April 16th, 1942.

After that they were off to help the allies do in Hitler with their Victor recording of "Der Fuhrer's Face". They did not come home again to KMH until the war was nearly over. By then, covered with fame and glory (and probably more money than Kraft would pay in those days), they reappeared on the Hall October 12th, 1944, then only very infrequently thereafter. KMH had made it possible for them to achieve a kind of zany immortality and Spike Jones never forgot that.

(Spike Jones and friends)

Of course, a very large number of singers and songs came and went through the seasons; The Foursome, Kraft Coral Club, etc. but not all of them can be chronicled in these brief pages. One group, the Music Maids, however, must be included, though they were hired as 'background voices' only, because they contributed so much and did it so well. They began to work with Bing just three years after he took over as host on the show, replacing the Choristers, January 1st, 1939, after first having performed their apprenticeship appearance 8th December.

One of them, Alice Ludes, lives today in the Pacific Northwest of the USA. She gave some of their story to Spokane Records when that company released a collection of some of their KMH numbers: "Five gals who met and became friends while singing for the film studios...June Clifford, Virginia Erwin, Dottie Mesmer, (myself) and Denny Wilson".

(The Music Maids)

They decided they might get more jobs if they worked as a musical group and so invited Hal Hopper, who had worked with Tommy Dorsey's Pied Pipers, to devise some arrangements for them. They spent some time melding their vocal styles and refining their material, then: "we heard that the producers of Kraft Music Hall were making some changes and Bing was looking for a new group to sing with him."

Of such simple stuff are successes often made: "As Larry Crosby had once been the business manager of a trip I sang with, we contacted him. He named us the Music Maids and arranged an audition. (They) liked our group and we signed a contract." More than this, the girls were put in the picture Bing was then making, "East Side of Heaven".

Their name had a peculiar way of being 'invaded' throughout the nearly six years they served on the show. At first, it was the Music Maids and Hal, then much later, when Virginia became Trudy and they were reduced to four, they found themselves sharing their fame with another performer, as the Music Maids and Phil, then...And Lee. Finally, having apparently succumbed to the male-orientated world, they ended their days on KMH as the Music Maids and Man. Seriously, it was probably realized that more timbre was needed in their background accompaniment with Bing than the girls could provide.

They served beautifully and consistently, evidently not once missing a broadcast, their sweet voices abetting Bing's on a great proportion of his vocals. They became such a fixture and their work so much a part of Bing's that little was mentioned of them. Even today, few of the LP reissues list their presence, Spokane Records being a rare exception.

They did not rejoin Bing for that Autumn opener in 1944. They were involved in the structural change and became another wartime casualty of KMH.

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Beneath the still placid and brilliant surface, Kraft's Music Hall with Bing Crosby was beginning to experience its first mortal pangs. It was growing somewhat subdued and introspective, feeling its age. Though as popular as ever with its doting public, those on the 'inside' were picking up unmistakable signals. Still wonderfully entertaining, it would linger on for 3 more seasons. Like the craze-lines on an antique vase which lend a deeper beauty while at the same time serving as ominous indicators of change, the old Hall glowed warmer, softer, more precious.

NEXT: DECLINE AND FALL

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Thanks for the use of photographs in this feature go to Carroll Carroll, Larry Kiner and Vern Taylor.

NEW YORK POST, TUESDAY, JUNE 25, 1985

Wedding bells ring for Bing Crosby's son

SHE'S just wild about Harry.

That's why Lois Robbins tied the knot Sunday night with Harry Crosby, the 26-year-old son of the late singer Bing Crosby.

Also joining them at the Pierre Hotel was Harry's sister, actress Mary Crosby, who was a bridesmaid. Lois is an actress and Harry is a stockbroker.

GOLF

Kathryn Crosby announced a new format for the Annual Bing Crosby National Championship tournament after severing the tournament's association with the Monterey Golf Foundation at Pebble Beach in April because it had become a "corporate sideshow."

She said the new "Clambake" will be limited to 200 amateurs and celebrities. They will play as two-man teams in two divisions for $2 million in prize money, all of which will go to charities. Golfers or their sponsors will pay a $20,000 entry fee.

The tournament will be held June 2-8 at the Bermuda Run Country Club near Winston-Salem, N.C.

The Bing Crosby National Pro-Am hereafter will be the AT&T-Pebble Beach National Pro-Am. The name change was forced by the withdrawal of **Bing Crosby's** name from the annual event by his widow, **Kathryn Crosby**, who plans a tournament under a new format at Bermuda Run Country Club in North Carolina. Their sons, **Harry** and **Nathaniel**, will continue in major roles at the California event.

The change was announced by **William Borland**, chairman of the Board of the Monterey Peninsula (Calif.) Golf Foundation, saying, "AT&T's sponsorship (pushed by PGA Tour Commissioner **Deane Beman** over Kathryn Crosby's wishes) represents a great opportunity for the future of the tournament and the future of the Monterey Peninsula." The 1986 renewal is set Jan. 30-Feb. 2.

OTHER THINGS FOR SALE

LP'S AT A DISCOUNT

Two of Melbourne's record shops offer discounts to members. These are: The Benteligh Sewing and Record Centre, 348 Centre Road, Bentleigh (ph 557 1050) and Cunninghams, 80 Church St, Brighton. (Ph 592 2066)

BING TAPES

Arnold Baker, 48 Groomsport Road, Bangor, Co Down, Northern Ireland BT20 5LR has well over a hundred different crosby cassettes for sale, covereing just about every type of Crosby music you can imagine. One Australian member was so delighted that he ordered everything in Arnold's catalogue.

BING DISCOGRAPHY

Even if your collection of Crosby records is small, you must have a copy of 'Bing - Just For the Record'. It lists every commercial issue made by Bing between 1926 and 1977, in both alphabetical and chronological order. It's invaluable for dating your records. Cost £4 including surface mail or £6 including air mail. Please make payment to John Joyce. For details of address, etc, please see under New Record Releases.

RARE CROSBY LP FOR AUCTION

Bill Weeden Jr, PO Box 123, Clayton, Vic 3168, has a copy of the very rare 10" LP "LE BING -- SONG HITS OF PARIS" in which Bing sings 8 songs in French. The pressing is on U.S. Decca (DL 5499) and condition is acceptable. Closing date for bids is Nov. 30. Bill also has a couple of worn Crosby V-Discs for auction. Write for details.

WHERE TO ORDER RECORDS IN THE U.K.

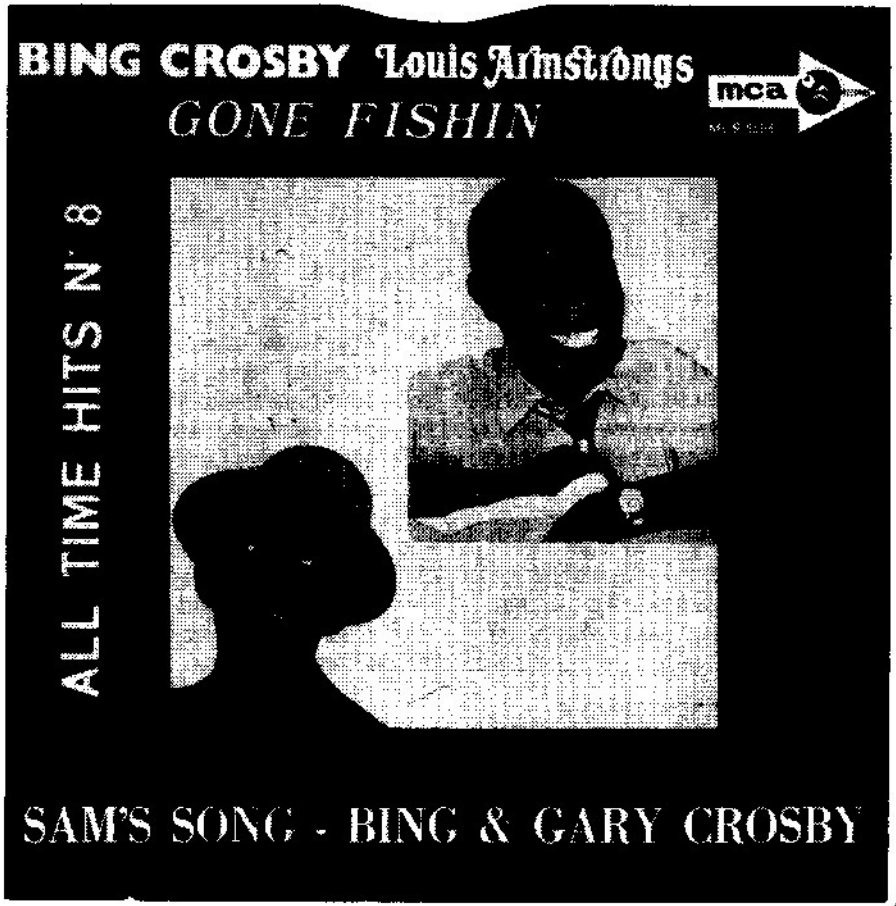
In our New Record Release pages, we listed where you could buy new records in the USA but omitted the UK. As there are releases in England that you might like to buy, we thought we'd better tell you where to write. Richard Pearson suggests two dealers with whom he is pleased:

MAIL DISC, 280 Central Park Road, London E6 3AD
RECORD CENTRE, 44 - 46 Loveday Street, Birmingham B4 6NP.

Richard advises that the latter store has a catalogue that you may like to ask for before ordering.

COLOUR PHOTOS OF BING

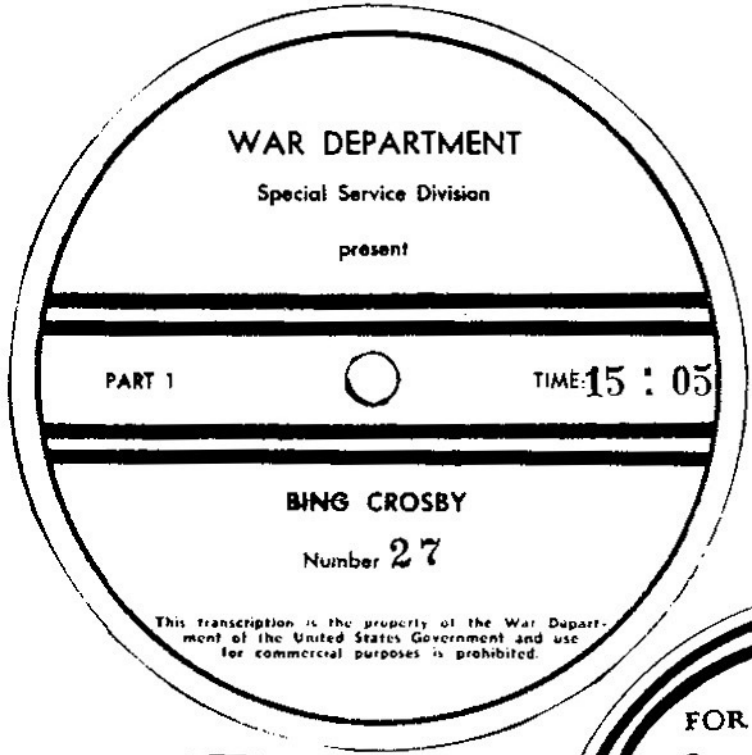
Frank Murphy, who is selling the Christmas stamps advertised elsewhere in this issue, also operates the Bing Crosby Colour Photo Club. Cost for Australian members is £8 p.a. and when you join you receive three photos plus two photo badges. Write to Frank at 32 Ferndale Ave, Tyne and Wear NE28 7NE, U.K.



COLLECTORS' CORNER

A mixed bag of unusual collector's items this issue. Above you can see the paper sleeve of an Italian 45 rpm issue from some years back. It features an unusual coupling of two of Bing's biggest hits from the early 50's.

Directly opposite is a re-issue of one of Bing's great early-thirties tracks with the Dorsey Brothers' Orchestra. The flip side features "Someone Stole Gabriel's Horn", a most unusual but most enjoyable early Crosby vocal.



As you probably know, during World War 2, Bing's radio broadcasts were pressed on special 15" transcription discs for use by the Armed Forces. This is what the label looked like.

Below is reproduced the label from an historic series of records produced right here in Melbourne many years ago by a very well-known collector who shall remain nameless! These discs featured a variety of items not normally available to fans in those days when few had tape recorders.

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NOVEL CROSBY STICKERS FOR YOUR CHRISTMAS MAIL

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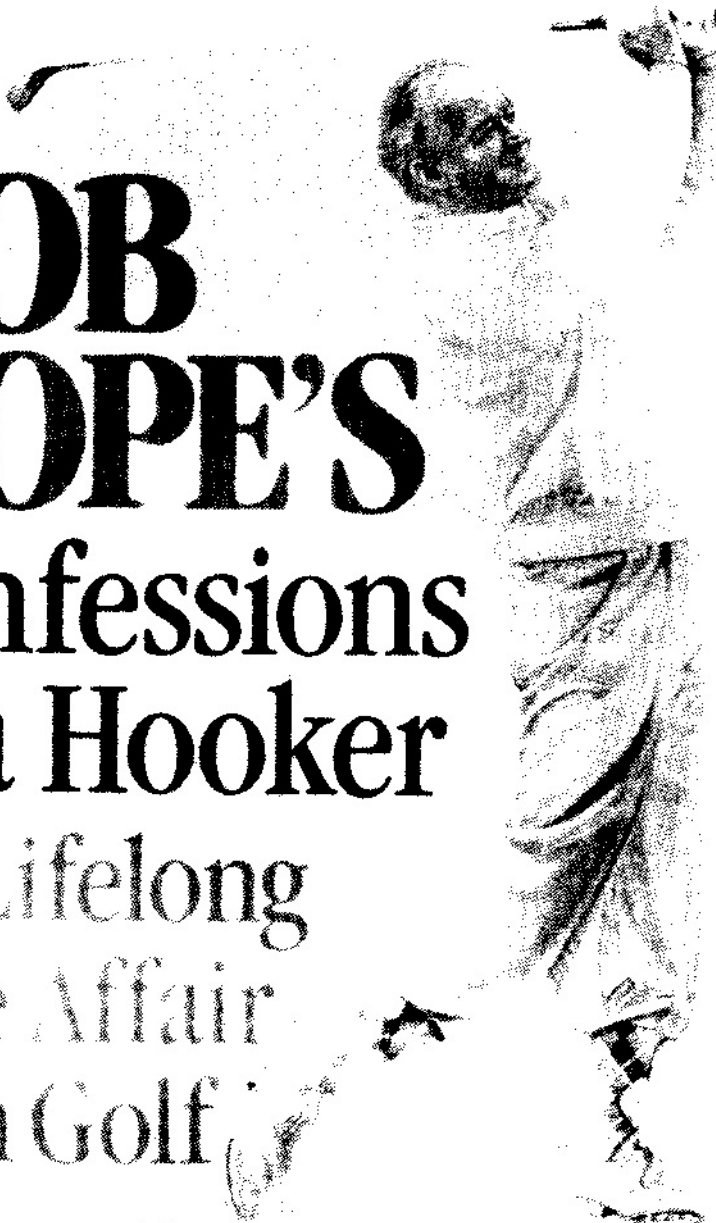
Enterprising Frank Murphy has come up with a new idea for decorating your Christmas mail. These photographic stamps (shown actual size) are in full colour and come in self-adhestive strips of 20. Cost per set is a reasonable £1.40 plus 50p to cover overseas postage by air. These stamps will be followed by a series of Crosby portraits.

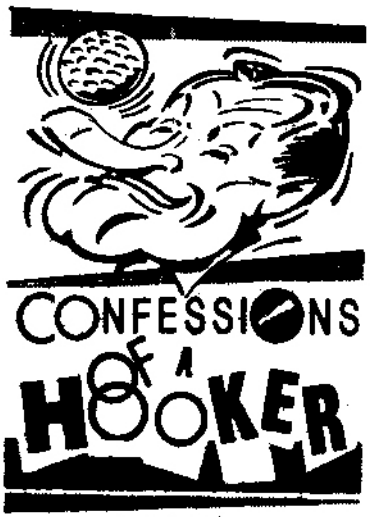
Please send bank draft or I.M.O. to Frank Murphy, 32, Ferndale Ave, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear NE28 7 NE U.K.

BOB HOPE'S Confessions of a Hooker

My Lifelong Love Affair with Golf



by Bob Hope as told to Dwayne Netland



By Bob Hope
(As told to Dwayne Netland)

HARRY LILLIS CROSBY. I suppose the mere mention of his name inspires a hundred different reactions, because Bing touched so many people in so many different ways. "White Christmas." "The Bells of St. Mary's." The Bing Crosby National Pro-Am at Pebble Beach. His radio and television shows, his movies. Some friends, among them my good pal Phil Harris, probably remember Bing best in a duck boat or fishing in a trout stream.

Bing and I made seven "Road" pictures together, but a lot of my fondest memories of him are on a golf course. I really don't know how many rounds we played together around the world — it must have been well over 100. He was an excellent player, with the slowest backswing I've ever seen. While he was taking the club back you could fit him for a tailored suit.

I first met him in 1932, at the Friars Club in New York. At that time we were both winding up our careers in vaudeville. We were appearing at the Capitol Theatre, doing three or four shows a day. Bing sang, I was the master of ceremonies. We developed a patter, a little routine that later became the focus for our "Road" movies. Between shows we'd go over to Alex Morrison's driving range under the 59th Street bridge and hit golf balls. That was the beginning of a close friendship that endured 45 years.

In 1937 my wife Dolores and I moved to Hollywood, where I signed with Paramount. Bing was already a big star there. Very large. He was also a prominent member at Lakeside, where he would win the club championship three times. One day Bing asked me over to play. I joined soon after and I'm now an honorary member. I was already beginning to feel at home in the film capital.

Bing was involved in a horse stable and real estate deals at Del Mar, north of San Diego. He invited me down in 1937 for a Saturday night show at the club. We went up on stage and did those routines we had done together five years earlier at the Capitol. Lots of banter and ad-libbing. It went over very well and a Paramount producer, Bill Baron, said, "My God, they're great together. Perfect chemistry. We've got to do something with these boys." That's how the "Road" pictures got started.

Then Bing put me on his Kraft radio show, and when I got my own Pepsodent show on radio, I invited him. Radio was the big thing in those days. The audience was tremendous. Bing had a remarkable ability to double as a straight man or as a comedian. He had a marvelous touch, with exquisite timing. It's all timing. He could

feed a line, and respond to it, and like I say, the chemistry between us was perfect.

And what a golfer! He was always a little better than I was. For a long time his handicap wavered between a 2 and a 4. He worked hard at it. Misery Hill, the practice range at Lakeside, never had a more diligent customer.

In the summer of 1941 Bing and I started playing exhibition matches around the country for the War Relief Fund. We both felt our country was headed inexorably toward World War II. On Dec. 7, Bing, Dick Gibson and I were staying at Elliott Roosevelt's home in Colorado Springs. When the news came from Pearl Harbor, we decided to join the Navy. Elliott got on the phone with his father in the White House and with Frank Knox, the Secretary of the Navy. Knox wanted to give us commissions in the Navy, but FDR said, "No, we don't want 'em in the Navy. We want 'em to do just what they're doing — entertaining the troops."

That was the origin of our Victory Caravan tours, a series of peripatetic golf matches that actually went on for 30 years and generated millions of dollars in war bond sales and later for the USO. During the war years we did a broadcast at a different military base each week, and tied it in with a golf match.

One day we were playing at George May's Tam O'Shanter Club in Chicago. George was in the business of selling Hawaiian shirts, so we wore them, of course, that day. The gallery was over 20,000. They weren't really knowledgeable golf fans, they were motion picture and radio fans, and when we had a shot on the fairway they would just circle around us. I'd say, "Open up, please, we're going that way."

On about the third or fourth tee, as I was addressing my ball, some wag in the crowd yelled, "Hey, Hope, your slip is showing." Everybody laughed. I just looked over and said, "Your father's slip is showing." Bing told that story for years.

At an exhibition in Fort Worth, Bing and I were getting ready to tee off when a guy in the gallery started up his motion picture camera. It sounded like a cement mixer. Bing backed off the ball and remarked, "Why the hell don't you shave at home?"

Bing was a great iron player and took some huge divots. He was also getting bald by this time, and wore a toupee in his movie scenes. One day on the course his caddie, Scorpy Doyle, retrieved one of Bing's jumbo-sized divots, brought it back to him and said, "Try this on for size." Bing chased him for 20 minutes with a brassie in his hand.

In our exhibitions around the country Bing always seemed to play a little better than I did. But I got him every now and then. In 1945 we were playing at the Salt Lake Country Club with Ed Dudley and George Schaefer, a couple of smooth-hitting PGA pros. I got off the plane and went to the Utah Hotel to have a chicken sandwich and a glass of milk before going over to the course. When the match started I birdied the first three holes, nearly making an eagle on the third. Crosby looked at me, with that funny stare of his, and asked, "What are you on?"

Dudley and I were partners. I didn't help him much after the third hole but Ed was playing very well and on the 18th tee we were 1-up. Bing was steaming. He just plain hated to lose.

Well, on the 18th tee Dudley drove out of bounds and I could see Crosby licking his chops. I hit a commercial drive and managed to hit my second shot safely over a barranca. But the

Bob Hope and Bing Crosby clowned both on and off the course

ball was lying on a dandelion patch. I asked Dudley how to play it. "Just hit it like a regular shot," he said. "Forget about the dandelions." I knocked it a foot from the hole to ensure the win for Dudley and me. Crosby chased me down the fairway with a 3-iron.

Phil Harris participated in the Crosby tournament for years, usually with a glass in one hand. In his first year, 1951, he won the pro-am with Dutch Harrison. In the last round Phil sank a putt on 17 at Pebble Beach that has been described in length anywhere from 75 to 90 feet. When they asked Phil how long it was, he said, "All I know is that I'd love that much footage on Wilshire Boulevard."

Bing and Phil were great pals. They spent a lot of time hunting and fishing together. I've never gone in much for the outdoor-life bit. The fish don't applaud.

It was Bing's friendship with golfer Jimmy Demaret that was responsible for the Legends of Golf, that great senior tournament in Austin. Bing's daughter Mary Francis went to school for a while in Houston, and whenever Bing would go down to see her, he'd play golf with Demaret. Jimmy was then building the Onion Creek Club in Austin, where they play the Legends.

They got to talking about how great it would be to have the seniors play — now this was before the present senior tour; in fact, it actually launched the tour because it proved so popular — and they thought a two-man-team format to be best. Jimmy went to Fred Raphael, who produced "Shell's Wonderful World of Golf" at one time, and the rest is history.

I did a show at the Legends and had a lot of fun. You can't miss with that kind of an audience. "I hear they're filling all the ball washers with Ben-Gay," that sort of thing. "I didn't realize how long some of these seniors have been around. Yesterday I saw a guy signing his scorecard with a feather."

Bing and I had those little bits, those routines with ad-libs. I kidded him about his money and his large family. He needled me about my putting, or anything that came to mind.

In 1957, after he married Kathy Grant and moved up to Hillsborough, just outside of San Francisco, I didn't see him as much. But we did get together in 1961 to film "Road to Hong Kong" in London and we played golf nearly every day at Wentworth.

One day, after doing a harem scene, we had the girls giving us manicures. I suggested to the director, Mel Frank, that we have one of the girls giving me a pedicure as we were lying on the couches sipping wine. So I had my toes painted as we were shooting a scene.

After we finished I rushed over to Wentworth for a few quick holes. When I had completed nine holes I was changing clothes in the locker room and I took off my socks. I noticed this fellow across the way looking at me. He noticed my painted toenails. The man looked up in the air and thought for a second: "He couldn't be . . . could he?"

Three weeks later we did the scene where Bing and I had come back from the moon as heroes, and they were throwing confetti on us all day. After the shooting I went over to Wentworth to play. It was hot that day, so I headed for the shower room after the round. There were two Scots toweling off. I took off my shorts, and confetti dropped on the floor. Like I hadn't taken a bath since New Year's. So around Wentworth I was known as the fellow with painted toenails and confetti in my shorts. It added a lot of mystery to my personality.

In October 1977 a good friend of both Bing and mine, Hugh Davis, dropped dead on the golf course at Baltusrol. I flew east to do a memorial benefit for Hugh at Summit, N.J. I was in the Waldorf Towers that afternoon when I got a phone call from Bill Fugazy. Bill told me that Bing had died that day on a golf course in Spain. The shock and sorrow were so overwhelming I couldn't describe it. I got Alan King to do the show for me in Jersey, and I flew back to California that night. It was a long flight.

I knew that Bing, despite the fact he had still been very active, was not in the best of health. He had lung problems in 1974, which kept him hospitalized during his tournament, and a few years later had that terrible fall off the stage at the Ambassador Theater in Pasadena.

What happened was that as Bing was leaving the stage, at the end of his number, he fell through a hole in the floor and dropped eight feet. He managed to break the force of the fall by grabbing on to a piece of scenery. I was in my dressing room at the time and when I heard all the commotion I rushed downstairs and he was lying there. Pearl Bailey was holding his head and Kathy was leaning over him. Bing opened his eyes and looked up at me. Then he smiled weakly and said, "Jimmy Dundee couldn't have done it any better." Dundee was our stuntman at Paramount.

Sometime after his death I heard that a doctor in England told him to play only nine holes because of his heart. Bing had finished 18 that day, and was walking up the hill to the clubhouse, when he collapsed and died.

A part of my life went with Bing. I still miss him and always will, just like the rest of the world. I remember the good times with him, and they'll be with me always.

Excerpted from the book CONFESSIONS OF A HOOKER by Bob Hope with Dwayne Netland. ©1985 by Bob Hope with Dwayne Nowland. Published by Doubleday & Co. Inc.

NEW RELEASES

SLIGHTLY LATIN

Another excellent issue from John Joyce of the U.K. this LP features material drawn from both commercial issues and radio broadcasts. The contents: I Do Do Do Like You, Maria Bonita,

The Old Chaperone, Copacabana, Laroo Laroo Lilli Bolero, Six Lessons from Madam La Zonga, Conchita Marquita Lolita, Pepita Rosita Juanita Lopez, Come to the Mardi Gras, Wedding Samba, It's Love Love Love, Borachita, Somebody Bad Stole the Wedding Bell, Baby You Can Count on Me, South America Take it Away, Papaya Mama.

JUST FOR FUN

This new release from Broadway Intermission, features a combination of blow-ups and rare commercial releases. The contents: We're a Couple of Soldiers (blow up), Corinne Corinna (parody), Robins and

BING CROSBY

"ALL THE WAY"

Roses (parody), I've Got a Pocketful of Dreams (unissued), Don't Let That Moon Get Away (unissued), A Blues Serenade (blow up), Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams (blow up), I Only Want a Buddy Not a Sweetheart (blow up), Hello Mom (unissued), Duke the Spook (unissued), Jingle Bells (blow up), You Belong To My Heart (blow up) A Door Will Open (blow up), You Took Advantage of Me (unissued), 160 Acres (parody), I Might Be Your Once-in-a-while (rare), Inaian Summer (rare), Spring Fever (unissued).

ALL THE WAY

A most interesting release on Blue & Gold Records, this disc features unusual Buddy Cole radio material from the late 50's, including several singing commercials (by Bing) for Ford Cars. Side 2 gives us Witchcraft, Catch a Falling Star, Chances Are, and several takes (including mistakes) of Gigi. Quality is excellent.

HOW YOU CAN ORDER THESE (AND OTHER) RELEASES

Those of you who ordered records advertised in our last newsletter will know of the extraordinary delays experienced in receiving your discs. (Very possibly some of you are still waiting!) For this we humbly apologize, but the delay is totally out of our hands.

The reasons are simple but difficult to overcome. They involve the instability of the Australian dollar and the resultant impossibility for us to quote an accurate price in these columns; they also involve certain American record producers being unbelievably slow in replying to our requests for information regarding extra amounts of money that need to be sent.

Therefore, and with regret, we have to announce that we can no longer operate a record buying service for our members. However, we will give you all the information here so that even if you have never ordered anything from overseas, you will be able to do so with confidence.

TO ORDER FROM THE U.S.A.

An extremely reliable dealer in California is Ray Avery, who operates a business called "Rare Records". Ray can supply you with virtually any Crosby LP issued in the USA. He also issues regular auction lists featuring 78's, 45's and LP's of interest to the collector.

Rare Records address is: P.O. Box 10518, Glendale, California 91209 USA.

THREE WAYS TO PAY

1. BY VISA CARD Do you have a Visa Card? Then simply send Ray the number and expiry date with your order and sit back and wait for your records to arrive.

2. BY BANK DRAFT Don't be put off by the name. This is a fancy term for a cheque. Just go to your bank and say that you want to send a bank draft to the U.S.A. You'll need an account number plus the name

and address of Ray Avery plus your own name and address. That doesn't sound too hard, does it? The bank teller will fill in a form which you'll have to sign, and 5 - 10 minutes later, he or she will have an American cheque which you enclose with your order.

3. BY INTERNATIONAL MONEY ORDER

I personally find this the messiest way to send money overseas but if you're used to sending postal orders, then use it by all means. The problem with an International Money Order (I.M.O.) is that the Post Office sends the payment separately and ususally a week or two after you've sent your order. Simply go to the counter and explain to the clerk what you want to send. You'll need the same information as for a bank draft, although, not of course, a bank account number.

HOW MUCH SHOULD YOU SEND?

Both "Just For Fun" and "All The Way" cost U.S$7.00 each.
If you want surface mail (8 - 10 weeks), add U.S.$4.00 for one record or U.S. $5.00 for both. It's essential that you quote U.S.dollars when getting your bank draft, I.M.O. or whatever. Let the person doing the work figure out the exchange rate for you.

Air mail costs a lot more, but you get your records in a couple of weeks. Add U.S. $9.00 for 1 - 2 records. For 3 discs: U.S.$17.85.

ORDERING 'SLIGHTLY LATIN'

As we said, this record is produced in England. The cost of the disc is £4.50. Air mail postage will be a further £3.00, surface mail £1.00.

Please make payments to John Joyce, 21 Birchfield Gardens, Low Fell, Gateshead NE9-7TJ, England.

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FURTHER NEW RELEASE

(Those listed as coming from the USA will probably be available via Ray Avery. Other countries; we're not too sure.)

BING CROSBY IN THE THIRTIES Vol 1 (U.K.) JSP Records 1076

Please, Here Lies Love (both from Paramount publicity disc), Some Of These Days, With All My Heart, One Two Button Your Shoe, And So Do I, Let's Call a Heart a Heart, On the Beach at Waikiki, Smiles, Remember Me, Smarty, Can I Forget You, Where Or When, Have You Got Any Castles Baby, Sweet Little You, The Moon Got In My Eyes, Whispers in the Dark, Jospehine. (All from KMH broadcasts.)

THE SEVENTH ANNUAL

TRIBUTE TO

IN TACOMA

MAY 5, 1985

SHERATON TACOMA HOTEL

THE B.C.H.S. REPORT

From Vern Taylor

The Tribute was a really gala affair this time, with the venue being the gorgeous Tacoma Sheraton. Each phase of the meet was held in separate auditoriums. When the cocktail hour was ending, the whole wall was rolled back and our tables stood waiting for us. The noise and buzz of scores of couples was increased as we found our seats and accepted our coffee from the many waitresses. Bill Osborn, our white-tuxedoed m.c. rapped for our attention. Then, following a suitable-attitude-changing collection of anecdotes and humourous observations, he introduced a number of honoured guests.

I was seated at table 1 with Ken Twiss, Osborn, Hobie and Kathy Wilson, George Ulrich and his fiancee, and others. On my right I had the privilege of keeping up a running conversation with the girl who sang with Bing on his Holiday Inn album, Margaret Lenheart. (She also appeared on KMH and is mentioned in the HAIL KMH! article.)

Pat Sullivan, Marion Love Massey, Carmel Gallegos, Tony Sponarich, Mr & Mrs Bob Lundberg, the Virgil Edwards, Roy and Maggie Starks, Frank McMahon, Bonnie and Dave Swearingen, Erma Jean Morgan...so many nice, nice Bing people. Around 200 showed up.

Tony Karloff, a retired Hollywood character actor who knew Bing and his days at KMH was the principal speaker. He put on a strong, memorable show. Seattle's 'big band' sound was provided by the slick dancing and musical concoctions of Fred Radke and his orchestra. The main vocalizing was done by another Seattle celebrity, lovely Gina Funes.

AN URGENT MESSAGE FROM KEN TWISS

The Bing Crosby Historical Society stands at the crossroads. Although we have accomplished much since we began, due to health problems and a financial crisis, I can no longer put in the hours necessary to the success of the BCHS. It desperately needs manpower and money to continue operation. There are no funds with which to maintain the Museum Office or to further continue any of the group's activities.

COULD YOU PLEASE SEND CONTRIBUTIONS OF ANY KIND TO THE SOCIETY NOW - WHETHER IDEAS, MONEY, ITEMS FOR SALE. Whether the BCHS continues or not depends on your support NOW. The address: PO Box 216, Tacoma, Washington 98401 USA.

The WASHINGTON TRUST *for* HISTORIC PRESERVATION

salutes

PRESERVATION WEEK MAY 12-18, 1985

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NOW BING IS ART

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From Ted Paradissis

Enclosed please find two photocopies of art work exhibited at the recent Pop Art Exhibition at the National Gallery (Melbourne). They are based on photographic negatives and are by Richard Hamilton. One is "Oil on Canvas" and the other is "Serigraph", an adaption, I think, of the silk-screen process. (As both pictures are identical, we've reproduced the darker of the two which is "Oil on Canvas. BM) The painting is entitled "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas" and was executed between 1967 and 1968. The original is 106 x 160 cm.

(Ted also writes:) I have also recently come across two good articles on Bing. The authors and book titles are as follows:

Patricia Fox-Sheinwold, Gone But Not Forgotten, New York, Bell Publishing Co, 1982. $8.99.

Barry Norman, The Film Greats, London, Hodder & Stoughton, BBC, 1985. $24.95. The article in the second book is particularly interesting and knowledgable as it takes into account recent criticism of Bing.

From Girvan Paterson

Thought you might like to see a copy of a letter I received from Steve Hoffman of MCA Records in America. Having been highly sceptical of the MCA hierarchy for some time, it is refreshing to note that Mr Hoffman seems genuine and also a fellow fan of the King of Music. It's true that it's not what we want to hear in regard to Bing's legacy being made available to us, but to me it's great news that it's all there and apparently all in mint condition!

June 21, 1985

Mr. Girvan Paterson
6/23 Paddington Road
Oakleigh, Victoria 3166
AUSTRALIA

Dear Mr. Paterson:

I received your interesting letter on Bing Crosby and am happy to reply to you even though my response will not be what you want to hear.

I agree with you; Bing Crosby was great. I would like nothing more than to release as many Crosby albums as I could. However, other factors come into play here. Trouble with the various estates regarding royalties and permissions, low sales and other things too ridiculous to mention have prevented me from releasing any Decca Crosby material except the songs that were slipped onto the brand new Judy Garland, Bob Hope, and Andrews Sisters albums. As you probably know, I was instrumental in re-releasing the Bing Crosby Brunswick album a couple of years ago. This was relatively easy because the old Brunswick contracts were free from hassles with all the estate lawyers.

Regarding the vault material, everything is there; MCA has not thrown anything away.

Regarding the films, sales figures show that movies in black and white do not sell in this country on video cassette or especially lasar disc.

Regarding your question of the condition of Bing's films, MCA has mint 35 MM negatives and positives both of the films themselves and outtakes from them.

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OTHER CROSBY CLUBS

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The world is full of Crosby Clubs for the collector and enthusiast. In these days of the unstable dollar , we felt it unwise to list the membership fees, so it may be best to write first and ask for details. Please include a couple of International Reply Coupons (available from any post office) to cover the cost of return postage.

INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE - Reg Bristo, Secretary/Editor. 7 Greenmeadow Close, Cwmbran, Gwent NP44 4 PJ U.K.

CLUB CROSBY - Al Sutton, Editor, P.O. Box 8283, Sacramento, California 95818, U.S.A.

SOUTHAMPTON BING CROSBY CLUB - Jim Newell, President. 17 Edwina Close, Bitterne, Southampton, Hampshire, England.

THE SOUTHERN BING CROSBY TRIBUTE CLUB - Phil Clarke, 21 Stockheath Lane, Havant. Hants. PO 9 3BU, U.K.

BING'S FRIENDS & COLLECTORS SOCIETY - Larry Gunn, President. 170 Terminal Ave, Menlo Park, California 94205, USA.

BINGVILLE NEWS, John Bassett, Editor. 15 Oast Way, Rochford, Essex SS4 5PZ, England.

KATHRYN CROSBY CLUB - Caroline Dawson, President. 1374 Broadway 7D, West Somerville, MA 02144 USA.

CROSBY CHRONICLES, John C Marshall, Editor. 39 Kings Road, Teddington Middlesex. TW11 OQD, U.K.

THE BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, PO Box 216 (new address), Tacoma Washington 98401, U.S.A. We've left this society 'til last to speak of the excellent work of its Founder and President, Ken Twiss. The BCHS is without doubt the most important Crosby organization in the world today. As well as being involved in many community projects in Bing's home town of Tacoma, it is actively campaigning to get approval for a U.S. commemorative stamp for Bing and to raise the necessary funds to purchase Bing's first home as a centre for the Society's activities and a living museum of Crosbyana. But, as you will read elsewhere in the newsletter, The BCHS is in a financial crisis and requires YOUR help NOW if it is to continue. Every donation, no matter how small, will be of help.

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NEW ADDITIONS TO THE CLUB'S CASSETTE LIBRARY

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As we have mentioned in past issues there is more than one John Joyce in the U.K. who is a Crosby collector. In fact, there are no less than three! And two of these are members of this Club.

One John Joyce you know is the John Joyce who produces the records and excellent publications advertised in this magazine.

However, the other John Joyce is no less enterprising. Drawing on his large stock of Crosby radio broadcasts from the 1940's and 50's, he is compiling cassettes of Crosby songs and sending these out to friends who may be interested. It should be stressed that John is not operating a commercial enterprise and his tapes are not for sale.

However, John has very kindly offered copies of his tapes as they are released to this Society to include in its cassette library. For this we are most grateful as his tapes contain many many songs that Bing never recorded commercially but that you wish he had! Songs like 'Wild Horses', 'Mr Taptoe', Somebody Stole the Wedding Bell, 'The Jones Boy' and 'Singing in the Rain'.

Initially, we have four of John's tapes in the library, but more will be added in the coming months. You'll have to take pot luck with what's on the tapes as I'm not going to list the contents here but I know you'll be delighted.

The tapes are catalogued: JJ1, JJ2, JJ3 and JJ4.

First orders get first choice. Applications should be made only on the Club ordering form, copies of which will be sent on request. As we won't be able to tell you of further releases until our November issue, you might like to enquire from time to time whether any more tapes have been added.

SORRY, the Club's cassette library is available only to AUSTRALIAN members.

FUTURE ADDITIONS Most members will recall the excellent BBC series on Bing narrated by Douglas Fairbanks Junior. From memory, there were about a dozen one hour shows. Would you like these in the library? Whether we add them or not depends on your response to this request.

TRADING POST

REG ANDREWS, B16, Hunter Connection, 7-13 Hunter St, Sydney 2000

WANTS: VHS video's of Dr Rhythm, East Side of Heaven,
Road To Singapore & Star Maker.

Reg is happy to pay for your trouble in transferring these tapes.

JOAŌ DAUDT D'OLIVERIRA NETO
Rua General Urquiza 119, Apt 207, Leblon 22431, Rio De Janeiro, Brazil has the following records for trade:

Longines Symphonette - The Songs I Love - 6 records
Tributo A Bing Crosby - RCA 92 records Brazilian label
Saudade Nao Tem Idade - Sigla - Somlivre " "
Favourite Melodies - Imagem 5676 " "
Louis Armstrong & Bing Crosby on Stage - Imagem 5052 Brazilian
12 Cangoes De Natal (Songs of Xmas) Warner Brazilian
Bing and Friends Vol 1 - Continental "
Bing and Friends Vol 2 - " "
Sinatra and Friends - WEA 34020 "
Songs I wish I'd sung Decca "

Joaō doesn't say whether he wants to trade or sell, so why not drop him a line and find out.

COLIN PUGH
29 Picton St, Montpelier, Bristol BS6 5PZ wants the following back issues of 'The Crosby Voice':

1 to 9,11,15,17,19 and 25.

Colin is prepared to pay a reasonable price for these magazines.

BOB MACHLISS
c/- of the club address, has taken the plunge and has purchased a compact disc player. I'm happy to report that this wonder of the age is every bit as good as it is cracked up to be. However, I was wondering whether any of Bing's records have been issued in this new medium in other countries. They are issuing some older material here now, including Glenn Miller and certain jazz artists. There are also the excellent Ella Fitzgerald 'songbook' records from the 1950's, but as yet, no Bing. Perhaps we'll see 'High Society' on Compact Disc. Can anyone help?

PETER TATCHELL

40 Bambra Road, Caulfield, Victoria 3161, has literally hundreds of hours of recordings of American radio programmes of the 1930's, 40's and 50's. He is prepared to make cassette copies of these for a price of $5 per hour. Here's your chance to listen to good quality recordings of the classic broadcasts of Bing, Burns and Allen, Fanny Brice, Jimmy Durante, Groucho Marx and of course, Al Jolson. (Peter is closely involved with the International Al Jolson Society as Melbourne members will know.) If you'd like to phone Peter, you're welcome. His number is (03) 211 3577. Ask and he'll send you a listing of the shows he has available. He is also agreeable to arranging trades for broadcasts he doesn't have, and is particularly interested in hearing from anyone with recordings of old BBC shows like 'Take It From Here', "Hancock's Half Hour" and the like.

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BITS 'N' PIECES

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* ARE YOU MOVING HOUSE? Then please remember to tell us too! We can't send your newsletters if we don't have your new address. On that score, does anyone know the whereabouts of JOHN CORBET (formerly of 6 Wanda Rd, Caulfield 3162) or NORM BURMEISTER (formerly of 3/59 Iona St, Black Rock 3193) ?

* HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO A BOB DERONS' RECORD SALE? If not, you're really missing a great opportunity to pick up those rare LP's or 78's for bargain prices. Bob is a private collector who, twice a year, throws open his house for collectors to buy and sell their unwanted discs. Bob caters for every kind of musical taste - classical, big band, jazz, pop, contemporary pop (Bing Crosby of course) and his sales are always well attended. As I said, the sales are held twice annually, and go from Wednesday evening through to Saturday afternoon. Naturally, Wednesday is the most popular day and the rarest items go to those who get there first. But there are thousands of records to go through. If you have records to sell or would like to attend the next sale (Bob will ring you a few days ahead), get in touch now. Bob's address is 25 Hillcrest Ave, Chadstone, phone (03) 277 2747.

* PERRY COMO FANS make like the address of the Perry Como Fan Club. It's 12 Church Road, Short Heath, Willenhall, W. Midland WV12, 5PT UK.

THE Q.B.C.S. REPORT

The Queensland Bing Crosby Society have produced their first magazine/ newsletter, and a good little publication it is too! Really puts our early efforts to shame. The Society now also holds several functions a year. Les O'Donnell sends this report:

The postponed Annual General Meeting which should have been held in June, was held instead on Saturday August 10th, and we combined the evening with a Musical Request night.

All Office Bearers of the Society were returned un-opposed for the next 12 months, except for the Secretary who had resigned prior to the meeting. As no-one applied for the position, the President volunteered to take over the post.

Our Treasurer reported that the club was in quite a stable position at the end of the financial year. However, it was decided to increase the club fees as postal costs etc were on the increase and the Club were aiming to purchase their own projector.

It was noted that the first issue of the Club Magazine had come out in July and the President was thanked for his great effort in getting this magazine written and printed on his own. A very good start to a worthwhile project.

The Musical Request programme commenced at 8.20 p.m. and featured no less than 40 requests, interrupted by supper half way through. The night saw quite a variety of artists played. Apart from a large selection by Bing, there were records from Al Jolson, Kate Smith, Frank Sinatra, Mantovani, Pat Boone, Vera Lynn, Freddy Gardner, Glenn Miller and Perry Como. The evening was conducted by Peter Trainer on mike, assisted by short commentary from Bing. The evening concluded at 11.10 p.m. with everyone singing and marching out to the voice of Gracie Fields singing "Wish Me Luck As You Wave Me Goodbye", a fitting finish to the night.

Our next meeting will be a combined Bing and Al Jolson film evening on October 12th at 7.00 at Abe Cassell's home.

MARY MAXWELL REPORTS FROM HOLLYWOOD

BING ON THE ROAD HERE?

BING and Sun Reporter Mary Maxwell got together over a boomerang on the set of his latest film "High Time."

BING CROSBY hopes to visit Australia next year.

On the 20th Century-Fox set for his latest film "High Time," he told me that it is something he wanted to do for a long time.

"Now with these jets I think I can make it," he said.

While chaos reigned around us—scene shifters, light technicians and dozens of workmen, who all seemed to be shouting at each other—Bing was completely at ease.

"Will it be a business or holiday trip?"

"Oh . . . a bit of both really," he replied.

SUDDENLY someone turned a searching arc light on us and I noted the heavy make-up on Bing's face.

"Say . . . how long did it take yer to get here by jet?" he asked.

"Sixteen hours."

"Boy . . . that's T-E-R-R-I-F-I-C . . ." he laughed.

Then he was wanted back on the set.

"Don't move — I'll be back," he called and wandered off humming a tune.

The film is about a billionaire—that's Bing — who owns a string of cafes and in the scene he puts on a chef's cap and does some cooking himself.

In the story, a waiter is so shocked when he finds out that the man doing the cooking owns the restaurant that he faints, and so a drawer of spoons falls over him.

I lost count of the number of times Bing and the cast rehearsed the scene. Over and over again, Bing took off his coat and put on the chef's cap and over AND over again the waiter fell back with the shower of spoons around him.

But when he had finished Bing was still humming the little tune.

As he sat down the arc light went on us again.

"Easy now, boys . . . Give it a rest," he laughed and the light was turned round back on to the set.

"Bing, you amaze me how you can keep so calm with all this going on," I said.

"Mary, I never worry about it. Take it easy and you live longer. Learn to ease up a bit and take things as they come," he said.

He went on to say how he had wanted to see Australia, but before it had always been miles away and his business could not let him spend days travelling.

"But now, yer see, with jets I can."

He hopes to bring his wife, **Kathryn**, with him and has already discussed the plan with her.

"And I'll stay two or three months so I can see something," he said.

I told him I thought he would like Australia as there was so much to see.

"Good fishing AND good golf courses," I said. "And if Bob Hope has said anything about our golf courses don't take any notice of him, as they are beautiful."

"Oh . . . Hope . . . don't worry, honey . . . I NEVER believe him," he laughed again.

"No, seriously . . . I get a lot of fan mail from Australia and I have made up my mind to come and see it for myself and next year too," said Bing.

AS a sort of bribe I presented him with a boomerang.

"Say . . . how do yer throw it," he asked.

I tried to show him and explain that if thrown the right way it will come back.

"How about that . . . really. Have you seen it done?

"I'm goin' to practise tonight when I get home, but out on the lawn. Just wait till I show Kathryn this," he said.

But it was back to work again for Bing and as I waved goodbye he turned towards me and sung loudly . . . .

"Mary . . . for it was Mary . . . See you in Melbourne . . . is that how y'er say it . . . in 1961 . . ."

FROM OUT OF THE PAST

THE GREAT CROONERS

(continued)

While Mr. Vallee's fans huddled close to their radios in 1932, waiting for the familiar greeting, "Heigh-ho, everybody!," millions of people were tuning in to hear a much deeper, more manly voice croon "Boo-boo-boo-boo." Of course, it was none other than Bing Crosby, whose 1932 hit *I Surrender, Dear* convinced CBS that he deserved his own radio show. As a member of The Rhythm Boys, he'd sung with Paul Whiteman's band in 1927; but in 1930, the trio moved to Los Angeles to join Gus Arnheim's orchestra at the Cocoanut Grove. Naturally, when the public began to hear that mellow, rumbling voice on the *Creamo Cigar Show*, his stardom was guaranteed. It was absolutely chilling to hear him croon *Pennies from Heaven, Where the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day, Sweet Leilani, Sunday, Monday or Always, White Christmas* or *Going My Way*.

To realize the true power of that voice, just consider the fact that his radio success lasted from his debut in 1932 until the late 1940s and television. During his incredible career, he performed on all the radio networks, starred in over 40 films for Paramount and sold well over 10,000,000 records. All the blessings of heaven have been heaped on Mr. Bing Crosby and he is clearly the most accomplished, though not the most electric, of the crooning greats.

In my opinion, the only singer who even came close to Rudy Vallee in generating romantic excitement was Ruggerio Eugenio di Rudolpho Columbo—probably better remembered as Russ Colombo. When Bing Crosby left Gus Arnheim's orchestra in 1930, it was Russ Colombo who vacated his violinist's chair to fill the singer's spot. Perhaps because he sounded very much like Mr. Crosby, Mr. Colombo was an instant sensation; but it may have also been due to the fact that he was practically a Rudolph Valentino as far as his appearance was concerned. In any case, since his voice rivaled Mr. Crosby's, he was signed to sing on radio in the same time slot and the two of them really developed a musical rivalry. However, shortly after that, Mr. Colombo formed his own band and left radio in 1932 to perform in New York; the public, being very fickle, soon forgot who he was.

Although he'd made a number of beautiful records—including *Call Me Darling (Call Me Sweetheart, Call Me Dear), You're My Everything, All of Me, Paradise* and *Save the Last Dance for Me*—it was a movie role that returned him to prominence in 1933. Playing a gangster in Walter Winchell's *Broadway Through a Keyhole*, he captivated the women of America with his amazing looks, and once again he flourished—this time as a crooner-actor. By 1934, he was hotter than a mustard seed. When he visited Carole Lombard on one of her movie locations, it was rumored that the two were in love. America seemed determined to make an idol of Russ Colombo. For his second film appearance, he starred with Jack Oakie in *Wake Up and Dream*, which was scheduled to be released in September 1934.

Russ Colombo never lived to attend the premiere. On September 2, 1934, he was visiting a photographer's studio when his host struck a match on an antique French dueling pistol to light a cigarette. The spark from the match discharged a bullet from the gun, which ricocheted off a table and struck Mr. Colombo in the forehead, killing him instantly. Even though the critics panned his film when it did premiere, no one

doubted that had he lived, Russ Colombo would have been the biggest star of his time. The sad finish to Russ Colombo's tragic story is that his mother was never told of his death. One of his brothers wrote letters to her every week and signed them Russ Colombo; she died believing that he had retired to a sanatorium in Europe for his health.

For those of us who swooned to Rudy Vallee's singing, crooning really began to degenerate after 1935. Vaudeville comedians were doing crooner parodies and crooning in general began to get much more commercial and far less sincere. It did manage to hang on as a style even into the Fifties, but after 1935, it was never really the same. Romance was dying in the world as Hitler was tearing up Europe and by the end of World War Two, it seemed that cynicism and despair had taken hold of the public. But not me—not with the spirit of Rudy Vallee living inside me. In fact, when I'd see a pretty girl at the Page Three, I'd rush right down to Sander's Recording Studio with an original song to croon for her. In those days, I could make a two-sided disc for four dollars, and this is what I usually recorded (this particular one was sent to one of the loveliest girls I've met in the past ten years):

> Hello, Miss Snooky. This is Tiny Tim. You don't know what a thrill it was to meet you at the Page Three. When I saw your beautiful face, I couldn't find the words to tell you how I felt, so I've written this little song especially for you. I hope you'll remember me for it and give my best to your dear mother and family. Now turn this record over and let this song tell you how I feel —*You Are Heaven Here on Earth to Me!* And so this is Tiny Tim saying to you, beautiful Miss Snooky, happy listening!

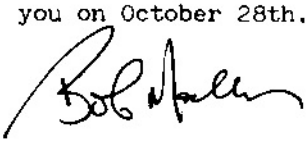
And this is the song:

You are Heaven here on Earth
You are filled with sunshine,
Happiness and mirth;
Your beauty, I can see,
Is oh so heavenly,
You are Heaven here on Earth to me.

If you ever said goodbye
I'd feel depressed, yet never cry;
For you would always be
In every memory;
You are Heaven here on Earth to me.

Then I'd go to the train station, take four photographs for a quarter and Scotch-tape the best one over the label. Believe it or not, there are over 50 of these records in circulation today (I was told Lenny Bruce had one), so I feel that I've been doing my best to keep romantic crooning alive. It's not really that hard; I would say it's just a matter of closing your eyes and dreaming. People may say that now is not the time for crooning, but I think that if a song is good, it's good for all time. There have been thousands and thousands of hit songs on records and sheet music—songs that deserve to be remembered forever. After all, just as much happened yesterday as is going to happen tomorrow. That's why words like then and now don't mean anything to me. It's true the great crooners have faded away, but that doesn't mean that the beauty and romance and peace they worked so hard to create has faded with them. It can still be with us—it's alive and real—in fact, I heard it just this morning.

And there goes another edition of 'The Crosby Voice'. Lots more to read next issue. See you on October 28th.



BACK PAGE SPECIAL

"It doesn't mean you're past it just because the rest of us don't remember this Bing Crosby guy!"